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Number of Board-Certified Teachers Tops 100,000 as New Studies Show Significant Gains in Student Achievement

Editor's Note: State-level data on National Board Certified Teachers, including information on some major districts in each state, is available online [here](#). To identify National Board Certified Teachers in your area, an updated searchable index will be available [here](#) on Jan. 7. To reach a National Board Certified Teacher in your area, contact April Jones at ajones@nbpts.org or 703-465-2175.

ARLINGTON, Va. — As the highly regarded National Board for Professional Teaching Standards surpassed a significant milestone of nationwide growth—100,000-plus accomplished teachers—new findings from [Harvard University's Center for Education Policy Research](#) affirm the strong positive impact of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in the classroom.

A recent report by Harvard's Strategic Data Project on the nation's second-largest school district found that, on average, NBCTs in Los Angeles public schools significantly outperformed peers with the same level of experience.

"These latest data illustrate what education policymakers already know: Teachers who become National Board Certified are highly effective and strengthen student achievement," said National Board President and CEO Ron Thorpe. "They demonstrate the powerful impact that accomplished teachers have daily in their classrooms," Thorpe added.

Formed in 1987 as the profession's platform for setting standards for accomplished practice, and to identify outstanding teachers, the independent, nonprofit National Board has developed the nation's highest teaching standards, which lead to improved teaching, leading and learning. While state teacher credentialing programs set the basic requirements to teach in each state, National Board Certification is the profession's representation of what it means for teachers to demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills and practices.

NBCTs earn this certification through an intensive, multi-year process of standards-based performance assessment and peer review. The rigor of National Board Certification is comparable to that of certification processes for the medical, legal and other major professions.

There are now National Board Certified Teachers successfully advancing student outcomes in [all 50 states](#), with the largest number of NBCTs in North Carolina, Washington state and Illinois. Nationally, the number of NBCTs has increased by 60 percent in the past five years. Eleven states have more than doubled the number of NBCTs in the past five years—Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wyoming.

Research Findings Show Impressive Results

Harvard's analysis of elementary-level L.A. students' scores on both the math and English sections of the California Standards Tests showed that those whose teachers were Board-certified got an achievement boost

equivalent to the effect of up to two months' extra instructional time in math and one additional month in English language arts.

Nor is this an isolated case: A [nearly identical level of](#) NBCT success in advancing student performance was measured in a study last year—also by Harvard's Strategic Data Project—in Georgia's Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Both studies echo a 2008 national study by the National Research Council, which found that [students taught by National Board-Certified Teachers score better](#) on achievement tests than students whose teachers are not Board-certified. Other studies have identified improved teacher retention and improved school culture as additional positive impacts associated with National Board Certification.

Serving High-Need Classrooms

National Board Chair and former West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise also noted that, in contrast to the usual pattern of high-achieving teachers gravitating to more easily served districts, nearly 50 percent of National Board Certified Teachers serve in high-need schools.

"National Board Certified Teachers aren't satisfied with mere success," said Wise. "They want their successful teaching practices to have the greatest impact where they are most needed."

The National Board's success in advancing the achievement of disadvantaged students was also reflected by the U.S. Department of Education's recent announcement that the National Board's submission had been named a "highest ranking proposal" in its highly competitive Investing in Innovation (i3) grant competition. The \$3 million grant will help support the National Board's work to strengthen teacher preparation and early-career learning for third through sixth grade math and science teachers, with a focus on those serving high-need students.

"NBCTs also lead in the high-need areas of science and math. Over the past five years, more than 30 percent of the Presidential Award winners in math and science have been National Board Certified," Thorpe said. "That's a remarkable achievement level for a group that represents less than 3 percent of the nation's teachers."

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan lauded the Board's achievements: "The ranks of NBCTs can't grow fast enough. More and more compelling data illustrate how high teaching standards and rigorous peer review pay off through increased student achievement. As we seek to better support and elevate the teaching profession, we will continue to look to National Board Certified Teachers for insight as leading experts in the education field."

Former North Carolina Gov. James Hunt, the founding chair of the National Board, also saluted the remarkable accomplishments of NBCTs. "The National Board's impact on strengthening teaching and student learning is impressive and enduring," he said. "Just imagine what that impact would be if every child had a National Board Certified Teacher every year," he added.

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The mission of the National Board is to advance student learning and achievement by establishing the definitive standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators, providing programs and advocating policies that support excellence in teaching and leading, and engaging National Board Certified Teachers and leaders in that process.

The National Board seeks to elevate the status, voice, and role of accomplished teachers in shaping a true profession. This includes 1) raising public awareness with respect to the cognitively complex, collaborative and expertise-driven nature of teachers' work; 2) setting higher standards for entry and advancement in the profession; and 3) recognizing accomplished teaching through a rigorous professional certification process comparable to those found in other premier professions, such as medicine, engineering, and law. You can find out more about its programs and plans at: <http://www.nbpts.org/>.